

so that informed decisions can be made regarding funding Iraq's reconstruction and deciding when American forces can be redeployed.

First, the United States must bring the world community together to seek solutions in Iraq. Iraq's oil reserves, strategic location in the Middle East, and its potential to become a failed-state breeding ground for international terrorism dictate that the entire international community has an interest in Iraq's success. The administration and the State Department must make more of an effort to utilize America's considerable diplomatic resources in order to rally international involvement in Iraq.

In rallying support, the U.S. should start by talking to all of Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria. Iraq's sectarian violence, while rooted in centuries old conflicts, is being at least partially fueled by Iran and Syria. Consequently, the United States must be willing to work with Iran and Syria as well as all other nations in the region and around the world. But talking does not mean ceding to all requests that these countries make. Iran must not become a nuclear power and Syria must not once again move into Lebanon. But the United States should be willing to engage with these and other nations if we are to move forward with international cooperation on Iraq.

As part of bringing the world community together, the U.S. should call an international conference on Iraq. This conference will work on putting together an international peacekeeping force that will replace American and other troops that are currently in Iraq. A second purpose of this conference will be to put together an international reconstruction plan for Iraq. Iraq still suffers from critical shortages in electricity and drinking water, while infrastructure such as oil wells and roads remain in a state of disrepair. Many Iraqis remain unemployed and impoverished, making them easy recruits for sectarian militias and terrorist groups. While Congress must be given more complete information and oversight over U.S. reconstruction aid being sent to Iraq so that American money can be spent more effectively, the international community must also be called upon to provide other aid and plans for Iraq's rebuilding.

Second, the United States should join with other nations to arrange a peace conference—akin to the meetings that led to the Dayton Accords—that will bring together Iraqi leaders to achieve important goals in national reconciliation, security, and governance. Broad-based pressure from a variety of international sources can make a difference in situations like Iraq's, as evidenced by the 1995 Dayton Accords that ended the war in Bosnia. Much like the current conflict in Iraq, the war in Bosnia was fueled by ethnic and religious divisions. However, after intense pressure from the international community, the warring parties came to the negotiating table in Dayton, Ohio and an agreement was reached. With similar international pressure applied to Iraqi leaders, and promises of international peacekeeping forces and increased reconstruction aid, it is my hope that Iraq's warring factions would peacefully come to the negotiating table. Peace discussions could take place in a country seen as a more neutral arbitrator than the U.S. such as El Salvador, which has proven its commitment to Iraqi stability by providing over 300 soldiers for peacekeeping operations. El Salvador would serve as a good

location because it is physically far away from Iraq and provides an easily secured environment. In addition, El Salvador has special standing because it has had experience with its own civil war and subsequent aftermath.

Third, the administration must be required to give Congress detailed reports on the situation in Iraq, especially in regard to security and progress on reconstruction. One of the reasons Iraq has reached this point is that the Republican Congress gave the administration free rein on Iraq policy without asking questions. The Democratic Congress must, and will, act differently. The start will be bringing the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, military commanders, the members of the Iraq Study Group, and other leading experts on Iraq to testify before congressional committees. Also, we must require from the administration a written, detailed report on the current security and reconstruction situation in Iraq with mandatory monthly follow-up reports.

Up to this point it appears that decisions regarding Iraq have been made based upon politics and not facts, political calculation instead of national interest. There is no place for partisan politics when it comes to the use of military force. The lives of our brave men and women should not be affected by political whims. That is why Congress must demand information from the administration. When Congress is fully informed we will be able to make intelligent decisions, based on our national interest, about when U.S. forces can be redeployed from Iraq. I believe that with congressional oversight and greater international involvement, U.S. troops will be able to start redeployment from Iraq in 2007, with or without the President's leadership.

Clearly, America needs a new direction in Iraq. President Bush is scheduled to announce his new plan very soon. Since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, nothing that this administration has done has yet proven to be successful in Iraq. But I will wait to hear the President and I will listen to the congressional hearings before I make a final decision on his proposal. However, if President Bush were to follow the three-point proposal laid out here, we would truly be moving forward in a new direction that will help stabilize Iraq and bring our troops home soon.

#### HONORING WESLEY AUTREY

#### HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 9, 2007*

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to and to honor the recent heroics of Wesley Autrey, the selfless New Yorker who this past week jumped in front of a subway train to save a stranger that had fallen below.

As we begin the difficult task of putting America back on track, we can all draw inspiration from this 50-year-old Harlem father, The construction worker was with his two daughters waiting for the train when he noticed that film student Cameron Hollopeter had suffered a seizure. The Navy veteran and two other strangers immediately rushed to the 20-year-old's aid. Autrey helped stabilize him, sticking a pen in his mouth to prevent him from swallowing his tongue.

Yet, just when it appeared that he was fine, Hollopeter had a relapse and stumbled off the subway platform. With a No. 1 train fast approaching, Autrey made a split second decision to put this young man's life ahead of his own. He jumped down and pinned Hollopeter between the rails, shielding him from harm's way.

In the days since that split second decision, Autrey has been deservedly lavished with tons of media attention and honors. Not surprisingly, the humble Autrey has been caught off guard. He wasn't thinking of the fame or glory. All he could think about, he says, was his girls—six-year-old Shuqui and four-year-old Syshe. He didn't want them to see a man die before their eyes. He didn't want them to witness their father do nothing to stop the blood and the screams that could follow.

He asked himself, how will I be judged? Will it be said that I had the opportunity to help and just sat there to do nothing. His conscience wouldn't let him be still—and neither should any of us.

We live in a time of great imbalance. In the midst of great prosperity, far too many are struggling to just keep their head above water. Far too many are disconnected from opportunity and hope.

We must follow the example set by Mr. Autrey and not sit on the sidelines while injustice and tragedy unfolds before our eyes. We must ask ourselves: did we do all that we could to help our fellow brothers and sisters? What did we do to help better the world?

Wesley Autrey has done his duty. Now it's time to do ours.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2007 CONGRESS-BUNDESTAG/BUNDES RAT EXCHANGE

#### HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 10, 2007*

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, since 1983, the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag and Bundesrat have conducted an annual exchange program for staff members from both countries. The program gives professional staff the opportunity to observe and learn about each other's political institutions and interact on issues of mutual interest.

A staff delegation from the U.S. Congress will be selected to visit Germany from April 20 to 29 of this year. During this 2-week exchange, the delegation will attend meetings with Bundestag/Bundesrat members, Bundestag and Bundesrat party staff members, and representatives of numerous political, business, academic, and media agencies. Participants also will be hosted by a Bundestag member during a district visit.

A comparable delegation of German staff members will visit the United States for 2 weeks July 14 to 22. They will attend similar meetings here in Washington and visit the districts of Members of Congress. The U.S. delegation is expected to facilitate these meetings.

The Congress-Bundestag/Bundesrat Exchange is highly regarded in Germany and the United States, and is one of several exchange programs sponsored by public and private institutions in the United States and Germany to foster better understanding of the politics and